

Black Hills National Forest EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Hydrologist Callie Ackerman Bearlodge Ranger District



What is your educational background?

I attended Black Hills State University and achieved two Bachelor's Degrees in Environmental Physical Science and Biology with a Chemistry minor, I also received a Master's Degree in Integrative Genomics.

What interested you most about the USFS?

I remember being younger and thinking the Forest Service was cool and it would be cool to work for it. Also, I grew up on a ranch outside of Hulett, WY and went to school in Hulett. Hulett revolves around the sawmill there and hence the Forest. I really wanted to be apart of the forest that allowed my town to survive.

What type of work are you doing for the USFS?

I'm a Hydrologist – I focus on springs and wetlands, streams and riparian areas, soils, and slope stability. The work I do revolves around the watershed – so I look at landscape level aspects of Hydrology, rather than testing water samples.

What is your favorite thing about working for the USFS?

Oh man...I have a few things. The main one would be the ability to work outside in such a beautiful area and to work on projects which promote forest health. Also, the people I work with. Everyone works for the USFS with the same purpose – to protect and help our forests be sustainable – it's nice to work with people that share the same goals and interests.

How long have you been with the USFS?

8 years. I started as a seasonal with the Northern Hills Ranger District and became a Hydrologist in 2009 for the Bearlodge Ranger District – both on the Black Hills National Forest.

What do you most admire about the Black Hills National Forest and why?

It's diversity. I work in the Bearlodge which has more deciduous trees and water, however I can drive an hour or two south and be in a ponderosa pine dominated landscape with granite outcrops. Even within my district there is so much diversity that managing my resource varies from project to project and there isn't just 'one fix' for it all.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? What would be your ultimate career objective or goal inside the USFS?

I would really like to stay on the Black Hills. I grew up here and have a lot of my family around here. I would like to perfect my knowledge of the forest and use that knowledge to help with future projects. I would like to be a NEPA Planner/Project Manager – I love working with various disciplines and people and I like managing large projects and bringing all aspects of the forest together into one working piece that produces a great outcome for the public to enjoy.

What do you like to do outside of the office...hobbies or a passion you have?

My three number one things are mountain biking, skiing, and trail running – each one of them with my dog, Leia. Being out in the forest is peaceful, calming, and challenging (depending on which trail you're on). It's great to be able to enjoy the areas that you've worked so hard to manage and maintain.